



US Army Corps
of Engineers®

TOWER TIMES

Rock Island District's News Magazine

August/September 2015



Dive Team Gets a Closer Look at Locks and Dam 15



**US Army Corps
of Engineers** ®
Rock Island District

TOWER TIMES

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On the Cover



District dive team member, Mark Hoewing (right), shifthead at Lock and Dam 20, helps Nathan Gorham, assistant lockmaster at Locks and Dam 15, with securing his dive helmet in preparation for a dive at Locks and Dam 15.

Photo by Samantha Heilig

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Tower Times

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A message from....

Colonel Craig Baumgartner, District Commander



Excited to Join the Team, Impressed by Professionalism

I am impressed with the District's diverse mission set and our invaluable contributions to the Nation each and every day. I knew that the Rock Island District workforce was well known for its professionalism, not only within the Mississippi Valley Division, but across the entire Corps of Engineers. Becoming the 47th commander of the Rock Island District is humbling, indeed.

Many of my initial days have been spent outside of the District Headquarters, attending training, exercises, and HQUSACE and regional meetings. I have also made a hard push to get out to many field sites as I want to meet as many of our employees as possible.

Commanding a District like Rock Island is certainly a new experience. There is a lot to take in and learn as I endeavor to grasp the wide variety of missions and programs we carry out. There is a learning curve and I appreciate the patience of staff and employees as I gain situational understanding and formulate my initial assessment.

My primary responsibility is to lead, serve and care for the employees of this District, and in doing that I feel it is important that everyone under my command have at least a broad idea of my command philosophy and who I am.

First and foremost, I am a husband and father. Family is a top priority for me and I hope everyone within the District has similar priorities. We can work together as a team to get the mission done but that doesn't mean family and loved ones take a back seat to our work commitments. A stable homefront and healthy lifestyle often means more efficient and productive employees.

My command philosophy can really be broken down into four main thoughts:

1. "Do it Right" -- Disciplined thought, disciplined people and disciplined actions as we adhere to our Army Values will ensure team and mission success.

2. "Emphasis on People and Teams" -- As leaders, we must inspire, counsel, teach, coach and care for our employees. We can challenge and develop employees by powering down, giving them responsibility to accomplish missions and then hold them accountable for results. Ultimately, we seek teams built on a foundation

of trust and able to adapt, improvise and overcome significant challenges. Team of teams bonded by active communication, collaboration and coordination (3Cs) is essential.

3. "Readiness" -- The success of any organization is founded on competence, effective risk management, system maintenance, equipment serviceability, and fitness (emotional, physical, spiritual, social and family), among other factors. We have to balance the demands of our professional responsibilities with our personal life to be effective and well-rounded.

4. "Have Fun" -- If we are enjoying what we are doing, we will do it that much better. I enjoy coming to work and have had fun throughout my Army career. I hope everyone within the District shares the sentiment that work needs to be fun and rewarding.

With my command philosophy in mind, here is what you can expect from me -- Respect. I may not understand the nuances of everyone's job but you all have my utmost respect.

I will be present, accessible and engaged. You can always count on my desire to spend time with the team, even though I will have responsibilities that take me away from the District.

You can expect honest feedback from me and know that I will set priorities, provide clear intent, guidance and organizational direction. It will be my responsibility as the commander to inform, shape and influence higher decision-making and policy and I will accomplish that by leaning on my senior staff for their expertise.

Finally, you can expect that I know that honest mistakes happen. No workforce or organization is perfect and mistakes will be made. But, an honest mistake is not a result of a safety violation, a deviation from procedures or policy, shortcuts or a lack of effort. Also, although mistakes can be tolerated, I will not tolerate the abuse of drugs or alcohol, unethical behavior, discrimination or harassment.


My expectations of all District senior leaders and employees are outlined on the next page.

I truly am humbled to be your commander and look

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Excited to Join the Team *(continued)*

forward to leading this great workforce. I know there are challenges ahead and I am already confident that the professionalism and expertise so prevalent across this District will have no problem meeting those challenges. For those of you whom I have met, thank you for the

warm welcome. I look forward to meeting the rest of the workforce throughout my time here. I know you will all continue to “Do it Right,” and you can count on me for leadership and support. Thanks for all you do and CONTINUE BUILDING STRONG. 

What I Expect of All Senior Leaders

- Take care of our employees and their families
- Lead our employees and teams -- inspire, counsel, teach, coach, and challenge them
- Build the bench today for tomorrow
- Lead by example; be a positive role model
- Provide a positive work climate
- Ensure predictability
- Provide clarity of purpose
- Cultivate a learning environment
- Promote good ideas and innovative solutions
- Power down
- Provide and seek constructive feedback
- Underwrite honest mistakes
- Be forward looking -- anticipate future actions and impact of those actions.
- Understand the environment two levels up (regionally, HQ USACE)
- 3Cs with a focus on positive relationships -- up, down, to the flanks and with our partners
- Drive execution
- Know and enforce standards and policies
- Work together as a team
- Conduct routine after action reviews; implement and share lessons learned
- A focus on safety and effective risk management
- Support our volunteers

What I Expect of All Employees

- Do it right
- Competence; seek self improvement
- Commitment to all teams and our mission
- Team mindset - share ideas; look out for your teammates; enable others' success; give credit where it is due
- Discipline - bearer of high standards
- Disciplined initiative; be proactive
- Focus on outcomes
- Apply lessons learned
- Maintain perspective and sense of purpose; understand how your contributions impact the team and bigger picture
- Honor the contributions of your fellow employees... past and present
- Ambassadors for our District, USACE, our Army and the United States


NEW GALLERY MEMBER

By Samantha Heilig, Editor

Retired Operations Division Chief, Kenn Shoemaker, was recently inducted into the Rock Island District's Gallery of Distinguished Civilian Employees.

Throughout his 31 years of federal service Shoemaker served in many positions in the Rock Island District, including Chief and Assistant Chief, Operations Division; Illinois Waterway Project Operations Manager; Service Base Chief, Mississippi River Project; and Project Engineer. Shoemaker also established the District Crane Safety Program and served as Dive Coordinator for many years.

Outside the District he served for a short time as Mississippi Valley Division's Acting Chief, Operations Division and worked in Washington, D.C., on navigation concerns at the national level.

Shoemaker's level of performance over his many years with the Rock Island District is in keeping with the highest traditions of civil service and reflects great credit upon him and the District. 



EXCELLENCE IN INTERPRETATION

By Samantha Heilig, Editor



Park Ranger Tracy Spry, winner of the 2015 Hiram M. Chittenden Award for Excellence in Interpretation, stands with her class of Junior Rangers as they prepare for some insect collecting at Lake Red Rock.
Rock Island District Photo

Interpretive efforts of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers park rangers are nationally recognized by the presentation of the Hiram M. Chittenden Award for Excellence in Interpretation. This year, park ranger Tracy Spry from Rock Island District's Lake Red Rock was chosen as the recipient of this prestigious award. This will be the first time, since the award was created, that a member of the Rock Island District has received the award.

In 2014, Spry was instrumental in developing, organizing and coordinating the implementation of several new interpretive outreach programs and events. She personally presented more than a hundred interpretive programs to nearly 3,000 participants and mentored a college intern who provided programming to an additional 670 people.

Every year Spry is involved in a variety of outdoor and environmental education events such as the Junior Ranger program, water safety outreach programs and visitor center programming. Her efforts this year also included the design and creation of Lake Red Rock's first natural playscape, a playground designed with natural elements to engage children with the natural world around them. Development and funding for the playscape required extensive coordination with local private industry including 3M Corporation and Vermeer Manufacturing as well as the Red Rock Lake Association and Central College.


In the local community, Spry is actively involved in outreach programs that give people of all ages a better understanding of Lake Red Rock's missions including flood risk management, environmental stewardship and recreation. Last year, Spry also coordinated with professors

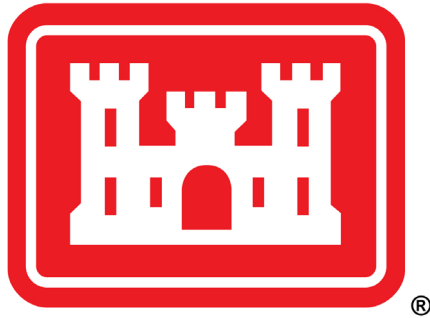
from Central College to help local kindergarten through eighth grade teachers learn how to incorporate science, technology, engineering and math into their everyday curriculums at the Teach-the-Teacher STEM workshop.

"Tracy's personal investment of time and energy has an exponential impact on the community because she mentors teachers and professors who subsequently inspire and motivate their students," said Cheri Doane, director of community-based learning at Central College in Pella, Iowa.

Other outreach interpretive efforts Spry has been instrumental in starting include guided paddle excursions that take visitors to Lake Red Rock's only paddle-in campground and a Trail Trekkers Passport Program where she partnered with local community members and the Lake Red Rock Association to encourage visitors to explore the many hiking trails around the lake.

Spry, a 22-year veteran of the park ranger field, was nominated for the Hiram M. Chittenden Award by Junifer Kruse who has been working with Spry for many years. Once selected by the District to be presented at the Division level, Spry's nomination moved on to Corps Headquarters where she was selected by Lt. Gen. Thomas Bostick, Chief of Engineers and Commanding General of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, as this year's winner.


"Tracy provides outstanding customer service to all she comes in contact with and is the face of Lake Red Rock to the citizens and visitors of the area," said Kruse. "Her integrity, honesty and moral compass are truly an asset for Lake Red Rock, the Rock Island District and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers." 



CORPS DAY 2015

EMPLOYEES OF THE YEAR RECOGNIZED FOR OUTSTANDING WORK IN THE DISTRICT

By Samantha Heilig, Editor

The Employee of the Year Award was established to recognize exceptional employee contributions during the preceding calendar year. Each year the Incentive Awards Committee puts out a call for nominations, which are accepted in eight categories. Once submissions are reviewed by the committee they are ranked and rated. The numbers are tabulated and winners are chosen based on highest ranking. Winning nominations are then sent to the commander for approval. This award is the highest Rock Island District civilian award for federal employees supporting the Rock Island District. 



The employees of the year were presented their awards at the 2015 Corps Day ceremony held at Memorial Park on the Rock Island Arsenal. (From left) Supervisor/Manager of the Year, Richard M. Busch; Public Contact of the Year, Michael P. McKean; Technical/Administrative Support of the Year, James D. Frederickson; Trades/Crafts Work of the Year, Joseph H. Goin; Professional of the Year, Lysanias D. Boyles; Clerical/Assistant Support of the Year, Keri L. Diedrich. Also (not shown in the photo) Engineer of the Year, John T. Behrens and Community Service Support of the Year, John W. Punkiewicz. *Photo by Samantha Heilig*

CORPS DAY FESTIVITIES

By Samantha Heilig, Editor

Corps Day is an annual event sponsored by the Rock Island District Welfare Association in support of employee moral. This year Corps Day included a variety of activities open to all employees as well as their family members of all ages.

The first event of the morning was a golf tournament at the nearby Rock Island Arsenal Golf Course. The tournament this year had 9 teams with 38 participants. The winners of the tournament were Allen Marshall, Matt Coffelt, Matt Zehr and John Hayes.

The second event of the day was a 5K Fun Run which took runners and walkers of all ages on a 3.1-mile route through portions of the Rock Island Arsenal. The 5K Fun Run was added to this year's events in support of the District's efforts to support employee health and wellness.

Other events throughout the day included a retiree gathering, award ceremony, employee picnic, bags tournament and bingo games. There were also special activities for the kids including shaving cream painting, crafts, water safety tattoos and a science experiment station where kids learned to excavate toys from frozen blocks of ice.



Winners of the 2015 Corps Day Golf Tournament (from left) Allen Marshall, Matt Coffelt, Matt Zehr and John Hayes. Photo by Samantha Heilig



Above: Runners (from left) Rebecca Costello, Trevor Popkin, Ron Plante, Chuck Theilig, Breann Nesteby, and Maren Stofelt participate in the Corps Day 5K Fun Run event. Right: Children attending Corps Day 2015 stayed busy excavating plastic toys from large blocks of ice using spoons, forks and containers filled with colored salt. Photos by Samantha Heilig



GOING IN FOR A CLOSER LOOK

By Samantha Heilig, Editor

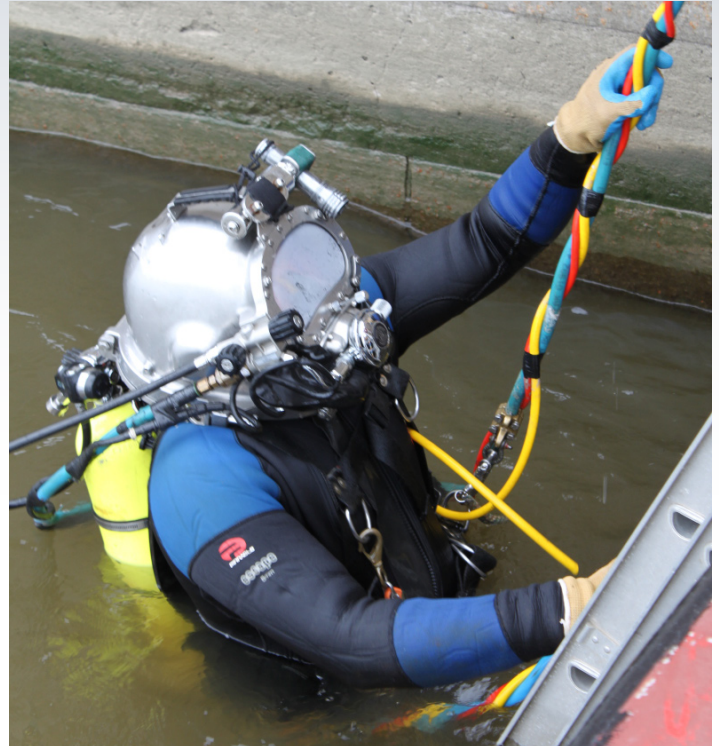
The lower guidewall at Locks and Dam 15 on the Mississippi River was originally constructed in the early 1930s. For more than 80 years this concrete wall has been used by commercial vessels to approach and depart the lock. Now, after many years of standing strong, the wall is showing wear and the Rock Island District dive team was called in for a closer look.

The guidewall, which extends 1,000 feet below the main lock chamber at Locks and Dam 15, is made of concrete and sits on top of a wooden framework of timbers known as cribbing. Recently a portion of this wall has started inching its way into the river, separating away from the rest of the wall. Operation of the lock has continued despite the wall shifting; however commercial traffic has needed to alter the way they approach and depart the lock.

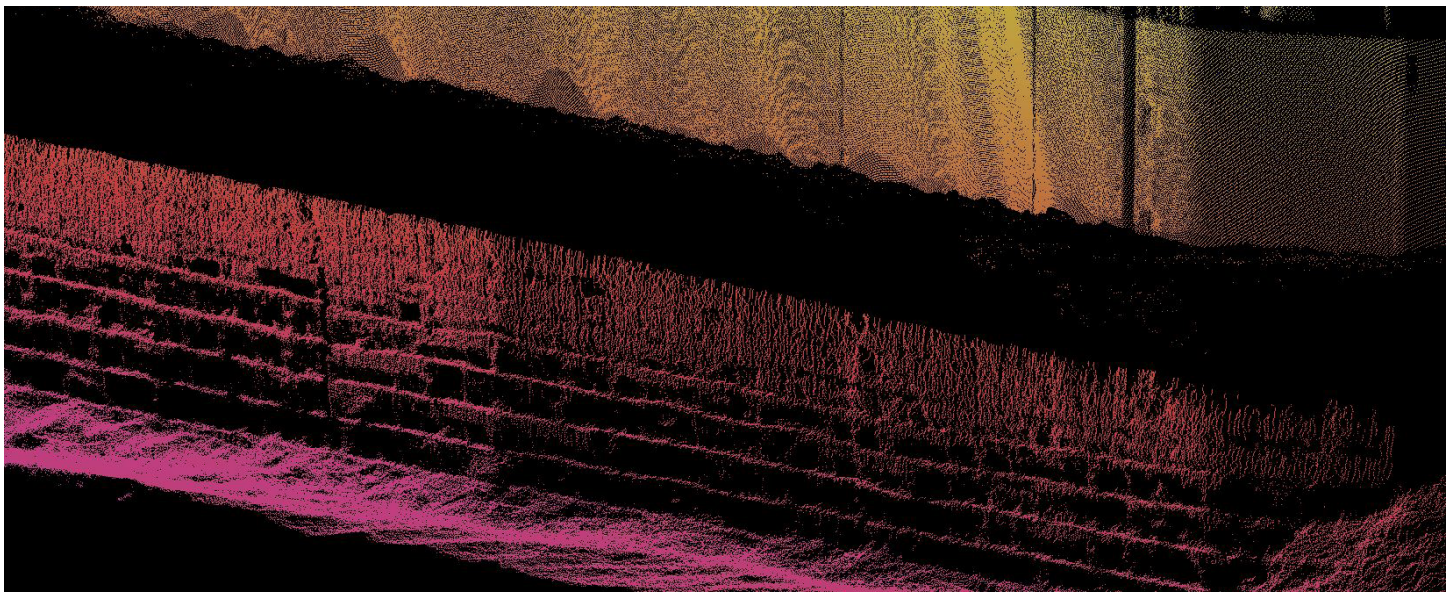
In an effort to get a better understanding of what was happening with the wall, a multibeam sonar was used to scan the underwater portions of the wall

“Although the multibeam is a good tool, in this situation it was not successful in helping us determine the cause of the wall’s movement,” said project engineer, Brent Anderson. “That is why we called on the District’s dive team to help us get a better look.”

The District’s dive team is made up of specially trained lock and dam personnel and maintenance employees who temporarily leave their regular job and serve as a member of the team when a dive is needed. Divers Nate Gorham and John Snell volunteered to help with the dive at Locks and Dam 15. Gorham, who is assistant lockmaster at Locks and Dam 15, was very interested in assisting with the dive since he is very familiar with the facility and works there every day.



Above: Dive team member John Snell enters the water at Locks and Dam 15 for an inspection of the shifting lower guidewall. *Photo by Samantha Heilig*
Below: A multibeam sonar was used initially to inspect the underwater wooden cribbing that supports the concrete guidewall at Locks and Dam 15. The cribbing shown here near the bottom of the image as alternating black and colored stripes did not appear to be damaged and therefore the dive team was called in for further inspection. *Multibeam image created by Seaside Engineering & Surveying, LLC*



“Although I’ve made multiple dives at Locks and Dam 15 it is always nice to see firsthand what’s going on below the surface of the water,” said Gorham.

Since this dive was taking place during the main river navigation season, special permission was granted to the dive team to close the lock to traffic for a two-hour timeframe to give the divers the best chance at gathering data. To assist the divers in getting a better look, engineers from the District’s geotechnical branch offered the use of an underwater sewer camera.

Inside the dive boat, which houses air tanks, communication equipment and additional dive team staff, the engineers set up a video viewing station where imagery from the sewer camera could be watched live while the divers were underwater. They also did screen captures of the underwater images to save for future reference.

“Because the water below the locks and dams is so muddy, it can be very difficult for the divers to get a good view of the areas they are inspecting,” said geotechnical engineer Bill Tague. “We thought using the sewer camera would give more people the chance to look at the images and make a clearer diagnosis of the problem.”

Radio communications are typically the only thing used during a dive to relay information about what the divers are seeing underwater. It is a detailed process that involves divers moving inch by inch, describing everything they see and in many cases what they feel since visibility is so low. On the surface, team members inside the boat monitor the location of the divers by feeding out air line and watching the tiny bubbles coming from the divers below.

“It’s intense work,” said Gorham. “But it’s something most people never get the chance to do.”

In addition to visual inspection and using the underwater camera, divers also incorporate a variety of different tools to aid in the inspection process. For this inspection the divers used a tool called a story stick to determine if riprap was missing from within the cribbing structure. The story stick marked with predetermined measurements is a good tool for the divers to use as the numbers can quickly be




Dive team member, Mike Back (right), communicates with the underwater divers through a radio system in the dive boat while engineer, Josh Hendrix (left), takes detailed notes about what the divers are seeing and feeling during the inspection.
Photo by Samantha Heilig

read back to the recorder on the boat and a large number of measurements can be taken in a short amount of time.

Although the dive at Lock 15 was for inspection purposes, the dive crew also has the capability to do actual construction underwater such as core drilling, installing anchors, cutting metal and concrete removal. Recently, the dive team played a pivotal role in the installation of downstream bulkhead recess sill beams at Locks 20 and 22, which required underwater placement and anchoring of the sill beams to the existing sill.

“Having our own internal dive team is a real benefit,” said Anderson. “There are many times when being able to get under the water has saved the District a lot of time and money when it comes to structural maintenance.”

During the two-hour closure, the dive team, along with help from the engineers, gathered as much data as they could. The team worked together to ensure the safety of the divers as well as get the best inspection data possible. Now that the dive has been completed, the engineers will take the information, along with data gathered from the multibeam sonar and recent geotechnical investigations to determine a course of action for the repair of the guidewall. Without the information gained from the dive operation, the designers would be missing a key element in determining that course of action. 

DISTRICT LIBRARIAN AWARDED FOR SUPPORT TO THE DISTRICT AND BEYOND

By Samantha Heilig, Editor

Rock Island District Librarian, Robert (Bob) Romic, was recently selected to receive the 2015 Excellence in Information Management/Information Technology (IM/IT) Support Award from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Headquarters in Washington, D.C. Each year this award is given out to an employee who has significantly contributed to the efficiency and improvement of processes associated with the support of IM/IT initiatives, has demonstrated commitment to customer service, developed innovative work products and services, increased positive employee and customer service feedback, and/or contributed to the enhancement of the overall reputation of the Corps.

Romic was nominated for the IM/IT Support Award by Command Librarian, David McBee, for supporting the Corps' missions not only at the Rock Island District level but also to the agency as a whole.

In 2015 Romic provided assistance to the Command Librarian in developing an Operations Order for funding of the USACE Electronic Library (UEL). He helped in crafting the narrative as well as did extensive analysis on usage of the system. Romic also used the usage data to then provide a cost/benefit analysis to support future use of the system.

"Bob's efforts helped me explain the continued need for the UEL program and highlighted the nature of the contracts and subscriptions to all levels of the agency," said McBee. "This was a new challenge for us and Bob stood up to assist with the facts, figures and charts that could make the case and achieve support for the funding needed to keep the program in place."

In addition to Romic's support of the UEL program, he has also assisted with gaining agency wide access to prep courses for the American Society of Civil Engineers Professional Engineer Certification Exam. These prep courses benefit many engineers in Districts throughout the country. Many of these engineers would not have been able to take part in the webinars or even been aware of their availability without Romic's efforts.

"Bob works hard to foster teamwork across the Districts and Divisions within the organization," said McBee. "He is a real innovator and leader in his role as a librarian with the Corps of Engineers."


In the Rock Island District, Romic oversees the management of the District library offering a variety of



Rock Island District Librarian, Robert (Bob) Romic, recently received the 2015 Excellence in Information Management/Information Technology (IM/IT) Support Award for his assistance to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Command Librarian in Washington, D.C.
Photo by Samantha Heilig

services and support to the operations of the District. His support to the District includes helping the District's Leadership Development Program by obtaining resources and hosting meetings, supporting Engineering and Construction Division's Geotechnical Branch by digitizing historic construction photographs of major rehab projects and supporting the District Levee Inspection Team by providing archival Congressional documentation.

In addition to providing daily operations of the library, Romic also participates in the District's Information Management Working Group which works to find more efficient ways to manage the information used by employees on a daily basis. As part of his participation in the group he created a draft working document for recommended digital storage options that is now being considered for use throughout the District.

To find out more about the District Library and its services or the use of the USACE Electronic Library visit District Library's internal website at <https://intranet.usace.army.mil/mvd/mvr/Pages/District-Library.aspx>. 

RECRUITING AN EFFECTIVE WORKFORCE

By Samantha Heilig, Editor

Every week, new job announcements open for the Rock Island District and are published through the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center (CPAC), who oversees the District's human resources program and works to get positions filled with qualified candidates. Administration and management of the human resources program by CPAC not only involves recruiting new employees but also includes compensating, motivating and retaining an effective workforce.

Earlier this spring, Human Resource Specialist, Don Feldman, and other members of the District CPAC team attended career fairs throughout Iowa and Illinois to educate potential candidates on the hiring process involved in acquiring a federal job. These events included career fairs at the Rock Island Arsenal and in Macomb, Illinois, which were aimed at helping veterans find employment. They also attended two career fairs at Western Illinois University and Carl Sandburg College that were geared toward students.

CPAC's goal in participating in the fairs was to promote federal employment programs such as the Pathways program for students and recent graduates and the Veterans Services program which aims to increase the number of transitioning veterans, military service members and their families employed throughout the federal government.

"People often have lots of questions about applying for federal jobs," said Feldman. "Many times they get frustrated right from the start when they can't find a job listed online when they know it has been opened but may be listed with a title they are unfamiliar with."

Navigating the USAJOBS' online application process is something the majority of interested candidates must do to gain employment with the federal government. Everyone from students leaving college to long time federal employees use the same system for finding new careers. During career fairs like the ones attended this spring, CPAC helps to educate about the hiring process and field questions from people who are interested in applying.

"In a world with many job opportunities, it is important that we help candidates find their way through the system," said

Feldman. "As unemployment rates go down it becomes more difficult to attract qualified applicants as there are lots of options for people with certain skill sets."

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the national unemployment rate from October 2009 was at 10 percent. By April 2015 the rate had dropped to only 5.4 percent. For the Rock Island District this means CPAC needs to make recruiting a priority. Low unemployment rates give highly qualified candidates a greater chance to shop around for jobs that fit their needs.

As part of their recruiting efforts, CPAC reached out to a variety of audiences including one group in particular that several of the fairs focused on, veterans. The Veterans Employment Opportunity Act (VEOA) provides that agencies must allow preference eligibles or eligible veterans to apply for positions announced under merit promotion procedures when the agency is recruiting from outside its own workforce.

One benefit of VEOA is that eligible applicants may be able to apply on internal job announcements even if they are not currently a federal employee. This is true as long as the job announcement lists VEOA in the area of consideration. Eligibility for VEOA is based on a number

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Current Civilian Personnel Advisory Center employees, Don Feldman and Karen White along with previous employee Kasey Rittmer, reached out to new potential employees at several career fairs earlier this year.
Photo by Lisa Kantor

Training Tidbits

By Sara Paxson, District Training Coordinator

Did you know... it is primarily the individual employee's responsibility to track and research important and required training for the job position they are in? Employees must take ownership of their own personal development. Brainstorm your educational career goals, research training opportunities and don't be afraid to discuss with your supervisor and ask for permission to attend. Follow up to ensure all job relevant training that is approved is entered and marked complete on your Individual Development Plan.

Civilian Education System (CES) - FY16 Course Schedules Now Available

To be eligible for a resident seat, employees must first complete the online distance learning (dl) portion of the course aligned with their grade level. As with all training, be sure to obtain supervisor approval before registering and completing any training course on duty time. Additional information regarding CES courses can be found on the Civilian Human Resources Training Application System (CHRTAS) website <https://www.atrrs.army.mil/channels/chrtas/>. Follow these steps to locate the CES courses available from the CHARTAS site:

1. Select *Army Civilian* from the dropdown menu and log-in using your Common Access Card (CAC).
2. Once logged in, click on *CES Eligibility and Completion Status* in the upper right-hand corner of the screen to find your target course.
3. Once you have found your target course, close out of the eligibility status screen and return to the CHRTAS homepage.
4. To register for a course, click on *Apply for Training* under the Student tab in the upper left-hand corner of the CHRTAS homepage.
5. Select CES on the left-hand side of the screen, and then select FY16 and the list of available courses will appear.
6. Select the course you wish to register for and click *Next*.
7. On the last screen, scroll down and click the *Submit Application* button. Once the application has been submitted, an email will be sent to your supervisor for approval for the course.
8. Within 48 hours of supervisors approval you should receive a welcome email with further information about the course.


Recruiting an Effective Workforce

(continued)

of factors including veteran's preference and time served. For more information on VEOA and all of the veteran services available, visit: <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/veterans-services/vet-guide/>. Additional information about the laws governing VEOA can be found in Public Law 105-339 at: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-105publ339/html/PLAW-105publ339.htm>.

According to the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, the laws that were created to provide veterans' preference recognize the economic loss suffered by citizens who have served their country in uniform, restores veterans to a favorable competitive position for government employment and acknowledges the larger obligation owed to disabled veterans.

"It is important that the District reach out to veterans because there are many good candidates who have served our country and because of their time in service they may not have received a traditional educational background that some employers are looking for," said Feldman. "Many of these service members also are not fully aware of their rights as a veteran and by reaching out to them at career fairs we can educate them about what the District has to offer."

The Rock Island District currently employs 285 veterans and since October 2014 eight wounded warriors have also been hired. Attracting and maintaining effective employees is a never-ending process. The Rock Island District CPAC team continues to strive to build a quality workforce capable of executing the District's mission of providing vital public engineering services in peace and war to strengthen our nation's security, energize the economy, and reduce risks from disaster. For more information on the employment programs available to veterans and others interested in federal employment, visit the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's website at www.opm.gov or contact Don Feldman in the District's CPAC office at (309)794-4202. 

If you would like to learn more about the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center or have ideas for topics you would like to see covered in the Tower Times regarding human resources and personnel questions, please contact Don Feldman at x4202 or email: Donald.E.Feldman@usace.army.mil

SAFETY CORNER

BEFORE YOU START BE SAFETY SMART

By Jeff McCrery, Safety Specialist

Falls and falling objects can result from unstable working surfaces, ladders that are not safely positioned and misuse of fall protection. Employees may also be subject to falls or to the dangers of falling objects if sides and edges, floor holes and wall openings are not properly protected. Any time a worker is at a height of six feet or more, the worker must be protected.



Unprotected Sides, Wall Openings, and Floor Holes

Almost all sites have unprotected sides and edges, wall openings or floor holes at some point during construction. If these sides and openings are not protected at your site, injuries from falls or falling objects may result, ranging from sprains and concussions to death.

Fall Protection

Fall protection must be provided for each employee on a walking or working surface with an unprotected side or edge at the height required by the OSHA standard applicable to their work environment. Management is also required to:

- Develop, implement and commit to a fall protection program.
- Provide training on the fall protection program.
- Evaluate the program on a regular basis to ensure the program's effectiveness and determine whether it needs to be changed or updated.


Employers are required to assess the workplace to determine if the walking/working surfaces on which employees are to work have the strength and structural integrity to safely support workers. Once employers have determined that the surface is safe for employees to work on, the employer must select one of the options listed below for the work operation if a fall hazard is present.

- Where protection is required, select fall protection systems appropriate for given situations.
- Use proper construction and installation of safety systems.
- Supervise employees properly.
- Train workers in the proper selection, use and maintenance of fall protection systems.

- Use at least one of the following whenever employees are exposed to a fall of six feet or more above a lower level:
 - ▶ Guardrail System
 - ▶ Safety Net System
 - ▶ Fall Arrest System
- Cover or guard floor holes as soon as they are created.
- Guard or cover any openings or holes immediately.
- Construct all floor hole covers so they will effectively support two times the weight of employees, equipment and materials that may be imposed on the cover at any one time.

Ladders

If portable ladders are not safely positioned each time they are used there will always be a risk of falling. Ladders may move and slip from their supports or a person can also lose balance while getting on or off an unsteady ladder.

- Position portable ladders so the side rails extend at least three feet above the landing
- Secure side rails at the top to a rigid support and use a grab device when three-foot extension is not possible.
- Make sure that the weight on the ladder will not cause it to slip off its support.
- Before each use, inspect ladders for cracked, broken or defective parts.
- Do not apply more weight on a ladder than it is designed to support.
- Only use ladders that comply with OSHA standards. 

Around the District

Retirements ...

Michael Bray, engineering equipment operator supervisor for the Illinois Waterway Project Office, retired June 30, after dedicating more than 23 years of service to the federal government.

Mark Witalka, lockmaster at Starved Rock Lock and Dam on the Illinois Waterway, retired July 3, after dedicating more than 34 years of service to the federal government.

William Poulter, lockmaster at Lock and Dam 19 on the Mississippi River, retired July 31, after dedicating more than 21 years of service to the federal government.

Fred Hanshaw, civil engineer with the Technical Services Branch, retired August 1, after dedicating more than 32 years of service to the federal government.

John Kincaid, chief of Project Engineering Section Design Branch, retired August 1, after dedicating more than 34 years of service to the federal government.

Congratulations ...



Congratulations to **Aaron Dunlop** and his wife, Natalie, on the birth of a baby girl on July 14. Liza Catherine Dunlop weighed 7 pounds, 3 ounces and was 21 inches long. Liza's big sister Norah was excited for her new sister's arrival.

Special Note: Tower Times Now Bimonthly

Starting this month the Tower Times will be changing from a monthly to a bimonthly publication. Hard copies of the magazine will continue to be sent out to employees and retirees as in the past. A digital version of the magazine can also be found online at: <http://www.mvr.usace.army.mil/Media/Publications/TowerTimes>.

ROCK ISLAND DISTRICT FEDERAL CREDIT UNION IS NOW GAS & ELECTRIC CREDIT UNION

By Kelly Ulrich, Gas & Electric Credit Union Marketing Director


On August 1, the Rock Island District Federal Credit Union officially merged into the Gas & Electric Credit Union. If you are a new member, welcome! If you haven't joined yet, we encourage you to learn more about this great employee benefit.

Gas & Electric Credit Union's main office is located just off the Arsenal bridge in downtown Rock Island at 2300 4th Avenue. You are always welcome to visit us there but the branch office in the Clock Tower will also be available. Currently we have about 5,500 members and \$70 million in assets. Unlike many other credit unions we are NOT open to the community. Instead we serve select employee groups including MidAmerican Energy, the City of Rock Island, BITCO Insurance, Illinois Casualty Company, Thomas Hammrr, CPS and now the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Rock Island District. Membership at the credit union is open to anyone currently working or



retired from any of these employers as well as their family members.

Gas & Electric Credit Union is known for our personalized, caring service like you are already accustomed to with Beverly and Sandy. We are confident that any business you have with us will feel the same way. We offer all of the banking product services you could want including a wide variety of loans, mortgages, free checking (including high-interest checking), savings accounts, debit and ATM cards, Visa credit card, IRAs, online mobile banking with mobile deposit and much more! All with little or no fees and the best rates in town.

To learn more about the Gas & Electric Credit Union stop by one of our offices or visit us online at: www.gaselectriccu.com. 

SUPPORT & SACRIFICE FOR THE CORPS

ROCK ISLAND DISTRICT MACHINIST SUPPORTS LOGISTICAL NEEDS IN KUWAIT



By Samantha Heilig, Editor

Machinist, Wes Coverdill, is glad to be home but says he enjoyed his recent six-month deployment with the Transatlantic Division in support of Operation Inherent Resolve.

He arrived at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, in January and his responsibilities included driving personnel to and from airports, ordering supplies and assisting personnel with lodging needs, also known as billeting. With support from Division leadership, Coverdill quickly progressed to become a hand receipt holder, vehicle fleet manager, facilities maintenance officer and a postal clerk. He also took on duties as a vehicle Contracting Officer's Representative.

"It was challenging to perform new duties," said Coverdill. "But I worked with some great people and that made doing the job a lot easier."

With the Rock Island District, Coverdill works as a machinist and fabricates parts for locks and dams on the Illinois River. His job as a machinist did not directly relate to work he performed in Kuwait but his understanding of how the Corps operates was helpful in supporting the mission of the Transatlantic Division.

"It just goes to show that if you have an interest in being deployed, it is possible that your skills and abilities can be used but maybe in a different way" said Coverdill. "I learned a lot from my deployment and was happy to be part of the mission to support the Mosul Dam project."


Although he enjoyed his time overseas he says it was hard being away from his family. He and his wife have five children at home so staying in touch was a major priority. It was important for him to keep up on what everyone was doing back home.



Wes Coverdill receives a Commanders Award for Civilian Service for his time served in Kuwait, from Col. Joseph Hanus, Commander of the Transatlantic Division. Photo courtesy of the Transatlantic Division

"We used Skype as often as we could," said Coverdill. "It kept me up-to-date on the kid's grades and events and it let me check in on my wife's health since she had two surgeries while I was away."

Coverdill had a pretty good idea of what to expect when accepting the assignment with the Transatlantic Division. He had previously deployed to Iraq in 2010 while working for the Army Sustainment Command and was active duty Army from 2001 to 2005 at Fort Lewis, Washington.

"I would love a chance to deploy again," said Coverdill. "It felt good to be a part of the mission over there and I look forward to seeing how this experience could help further develop my career with the Rock Island District." 

July Answer: Clark's Ferry Recreation Area on the Mississippi River Project

Winner: Doug Vogel



Can you name where this is?

If so, send your answer to samantha.a.heilig@usace.army.mil. Correct answers will result in your name being entered to receive a special prize and be recognized in the next Tower Times.



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
U.S. ARMY ENGINEER DISTRICT, ROCK ISLAND
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CORPS DAY RETIREE GATHERING



Lt. Col. Dan Segura (front right), Rock Island District Deputy Commander, stands with District retirees who attended the 2015 Corps Day picnic on July 23. *Photo by Samantha Heilig*

REMINDER: ANNUAL CORPS RETIREES' LUNCHEON - SEPTEMBER 9

The 2015 Annual Retirees' Luncheon will be Wednesday, September 9, at the Quad City Botanical Center, starting at 11:30 a.m. Cost is \$15 per person, including tax and gratuities. Reservations and advance payment are required. Checks can be made out to Dudley Hanson and mailed to 3812 North Thornwood Avenue, Davenport, Iowa 52806-5250. Deadline for reservations and payment is August 31.